

Once upon a time there lived a sly fox in the Great Redwood Forest on the north Pacific coast of America. The fox caught his supper by stealing fish off the lines of hardworking fishermen who fished in the ice-covered rivers during the winter. One afternoon the fox stole a line of carp from a hole cut into the ice by a fisherman. The fisherman had placed all the fish he caught on a line, cut a hole in the ice, and dropped the fish in because the icy water kept the fish fresh until dinnertime.

The fox, however, being a crafty fellow, snatched the line of fish from the water while the fisherman was not looking, and then he raced off into the woods to enjoy his delicious meal. As he entered the deep woods, he spotted his friend the bear. Bear was an amiable sort of fellow who believed anything he heard. Thus, Fox decided to play a trick on his gullible pal.

As expected, Bear wanted to know how Fox had caught all those fish. Fox smiled innocently and said, "I will tell you my secret, friend, and then you may go and catch some fish for yourself. First, cut a small hole in the ice. Then drop your long tail down into the water and wait for the fish to bite. At first it may sting, but the catch you will make will be worth it, I promise. But whatever you do, do not pull out

your tail until the sun goes down, because if you do, you will lose all of your fish.” With that the fox trotted off into the woods laughing to himself about his friend, Bear.

Bear was very hungry and went immediately to the river where he cut a hole in the ice. Then he dropped his tail into the icy water and waited to catch fish. He felt stinging pains in his tail but remembered what Fox had said, so he did not pull his tail out of the water.

Bear waited for the sun to go down, and then he tried to pull his tail from the water, but it was frozen in the ice! Bear knew he had been tricked by Fox and he pulled on his tail with all his might. Suddenly, his tail popped out but Bear saw that it was only half of it. The other half was frozen in the ice! Even though this happened a long time ago, bears still have short tails today.

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